

REFERENCES

SIMPSON, K. and DAY, N. 2004. *Field Guide to the Birds of Australia* 7th Edition. Penguin Group, Australia.

SLATER, P., SLATER, P. and SLATER, R. 2004. *The Slater Field Guide to Australian Birds*. Reed New Holland.

– JOSEPH FROUDIST, 17 Tabard St., Greenwood, Western Australia

Winter activity in the Dugite, *Pseudonaja affinis* – Of the two most commonly encountered large venomous snakes in the Perth metropolitan area, the Dugite *Pseudonaja affinis* and the Tiger Snake *Notechis scutatus*, it is generally accepted that Tiger Snakes are cold tolerant and may be active during winter, whereas Dugites prefer warmer conditions and remain inactive throughout the colder months (Softly and Cockett 1967; Storr 1988; Bush *et al.* 2007). However, on 21 June 2009 at about 1.15pm I observed a large (>1m total length) adult Dugite basking in Star Swamp Bushland Reserve (31°51'S, 115°46'E).

The Dugite was coiled at the base of a *Xanthorrhoea preissii*, located immediately adjacent to a limestone track in an area of Tuart open woodland. Its coils were arranged laterally but resting on the side of the *Xanthorrhoea* trunk and therefore perpendicular to the ground – presumably the better to absorb heat from the low, weak sunlight.

Although I could not see the Dugite's head, it was obviously aware of me as it began to disappear a few seconds after I stopped to observe it. It took refuge amongst the surrounding tangle of vegetation and the low, dense skirt of the *Xanthorrhoea*: indeed, although I could not see for certain, I gained the impression it may have moved up into the *Xanthorrhoea* skirt. While not as quick to escape as a Dugite disturbed during the warmer months, it was nevertheless quite sure in its movements and had disappeared from sight after several seconds. Although the day was cool and cloudy with occasional patches of sunshine, the Dugite's dorsal colouration, a dark monotone brown, would have helped it to absorb heat. The temperature range for the day was 7–16°C (Bureau of Meteorology).

REFERENCES

BUSH, B., MARYAN, B., BROWNE-COOPER, R. and ROBINSON, D. 2007. *Reptiles and frogs in the bush: southwestern Australia*. University of Western Australia Press, Crawley.

SOFTLY, A. and COCKETT, E.G. 1967. The overwintering of some captive indigenous reptiles in Perth. *Western Australian Naturalist* 10:100.

STORR, G.M. 1988. *Dangerous snakes of Western Australia* (rev. ed.). Western Australian Museum, Perth.

– PAUL ORANGE, 18 Balfern Court, Hamersley, WA 6022